

April 3, 2007 - Slaughter: Bush Statements on Readiness Directly Contradict Planned Operations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 3, 2007

Slaughter: Bush Statements on Readiness Directly Contradict Planned Operations to Affect Two Army Units

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, today responded to statements made by President Bush this morning concerning troop readiness and deployment schedules.

"Today, President Bush again ignored ongoing realities facing our armed forces, instead saying that Congress risked causing a situation his own policies have already created," Rep. Slaughter said.

"This Administration's policies have pushed our military and its soldiers to the breaking point," the Congresswoman continued. "Our soldiers have been forced to fight without proper training, equipment, and rest time and again. The supplemental spending bill passed by the House addresses that reality honestly and directly."

"Today, we learned that a unit in Texas will soon be sent back to Iraq after only 7 months of leave," Rep. Slaughter said. "It is an unparalleled departure from the Pentagon's own rest and training standards, and a direct result of the President's decision to escalate the war."

"And yet, President Bush stood before the nation this morning and said it was Congress who risked sending our troops into battle without proper equipment, training, and leave time."

"His statements directly contradict realities on the ground. The American people don't want our soldiers sent into a war zone without being given everything they need for success. If the President agrees, then he will work with Democrats in Congress to pass our supplemental spending legislation."

BACKGROUND: President's Statements Directly Contradict Planned Military Operations Affecting Troops in New York and Texas

An Associated Press news report published today in the Houston Chronicle states that, "For just the second time since the war began, the Army is sending large units - including one from Texas - back to Iraq without at least a year at home, defense officials said Monday."

"The move signaled how stretched the U.S. fighting force has become," the article continues, noting that, "The 4th Infantry Division [based in Killeen, Texas]...will return to Iraq after a little more than seven months at home - the largest departure from the Army's goal of giving units at least a year's rest per year deployed." The report also noted that a second unit based at Fort Drum in New York "will go back to Iraq after 10 1/2 months at home."

The story explained that the units "will return to Iraq this summer in order to maintain through August the military buildup President Bush announced earlier this year."

The story was also reported today in a second article in the San Francisco Chronicle.

Despite these reports President Bush made the following statements at a news conference this morning:

"Congress' failure to fund our troops on the front lines will mean that some of our military families could wait longer for their loved ones to return from the front lines, and others could see their loved ones headed back to the war sooner than they need to. That is unacceptable to me, and I believe it is unacceptable to the American people."

"Congress' most basic responsibility is to give our troops the equipment and training they need to fight our enemies and protect our nation," Mr. Bush continued. "They're now failing in that responsibility. And if they do not change course in the coming weeks, the price of that failure will be paid by our troops and their loved ones."

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